

Chapter 4 – Land Use

Taylor Comprehensive Plan – 2004

This chapter's purpose is to address the current and future use of land in the City of Taylor and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Through effective land use planning, the City can provide the framework for new development and redevelopment to ensure a vital and attractive community with a strong tax base, quality neighborhoods, and efficient street and utility systems.

True comprehensive planning recognizes the linkages between land use, transportation, utilities, parks, community facilities and the capital improvements. Residences require access to these facilities, but protection from incompatible uses. Different types of residential uses require different types of city services. Commercial and industrial uses should be convenient both for inter-city and intra-city traffic. Topographical constraints and land ownership status must also be considered as impacts that limit development opportunities.

In considering land use in the City of Taylor, key issues were identified based on community input. Goals, objectives and actions were then developed to address those issues. Beginning with the current land uses that are documented in the **Figure 4.1 - Existing Land Use Map**, the future land uses are defined in **Figure 4.2 – 2025 Future Land Use Plan**. This map and its associated policies provide the guide for ongoing land development and redevelopment in the City and its ETJ over the next 20 years.

Key Issues

A Town Meeting was held on January 26, 2004 to provide the citizens of Taylor with the opportunity to share their perceptions of the City. Through a series of discussions, residents talked about the strengths and weaknesses of the City, as well as the opportunities that exist, and the threats that would impede development. These issues will be developed in more detail and will appear as a continuing thread in all chapters of the Plan. Some of the key land use issues are:

- ✦ Need for commercial and residential development in the south and west portion of the city
- ✦ Preservation of historic buildings and areas
- ✦ Poor housing conditions in parts of the city
- ✦ Desire for mixed used development in the Downtown area
- ✦ Appropriate commercial activity along Highway 79 and Loop 427
- ✦ Providing attractive entrance/gateways into the City

As Central Texas continues to experience phenomenal growth, Taylor is in the position to provide a variety of new and restored housing opportunities. *Envision Central Texas* recommends more multifamily and infill projects to curb unwanted sprawl. With housing comes the demand for services and products. Recently, most of the growth has been on the north side of the City. However, there is increasing interest in residential and commercial development on the southern portion of the Loop.

Taylor has many historic and older houses and buildings. These are assets of the community, but restoration and rehabilitation are complex processes often resulting in higher taxes. There are a number of declining housing units that could be available for improvements that would make them livable and marketable.

Mixed residential and commercial uses in the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods could encourage revitalization of those areas.

The areas along the Loop, both in the city and ETJ are ripe for development. Appropriate commercial and industrial locations at intersections with residential areas buffered from negative impact should be considered.

There is an interest in constructing new and attractively landscaped entrance signs that welcome residents and visitors to Taylor. Locations should be on major and minor arterials at the city limits.

Role of City Government

The City's role in land use planning is a combination of policy development and implementation. The City Council is responsible for adopting a comprehensive plan that guides both growth and redevelopment and following through on the proposed actions. The Planning and Zoning Commission will use the Comprehensive Plan in conjunction with the implementation tools—the subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance, capital improvements program, construction standards and code enforcement—to evaluate and recommend new developments, redevelopment, and use changes to continue to ensure the health, safety, welfare, orderly growth, and quality of life in Taylor.

Existing Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan update begins with current conditions. In December 2003 and January 2004, an Existing Land Use inventory was conducted for the City. Existing land uses were surveyed by driving the City streets and ETJ and noting on City base maps how land was used. It should be noted that the Existing Land Use Map is not a Zoning Map, and that the categories shown on a Land Use Map indicate how the land is currently used and not necessarily how it is zoned. This map is a generalized map and is not intended to be parcel specific.

The categories used on the **Existing Land Use Map** are:

Agricultural/Vacant (Light Green): This includes farmland and open space.

Single Family (Yellow): This includes single-family houses.

Multi Family (Orange): This includes duplex, triplex, quadruplex, and apartment homes.

Manufactured Homes (Brown): All manufactured homes located within a designated mobile home park.

Commercial (Red): All retail and commercial businesses.

Industrial (Purple): All manufacturing, warehousing or distribution land uses.

Institutional (Blue): This includes churches, cemeteries, VFW and SPJST buildings.

Public (Light Blue): This includes City owned, Taylor Independent School District, and Williamson County facilities.

Park (Green): All dedicated City park facilities, private parks, and golf courses.

The resulting map, **Figure 4.1 - Existing Land Use** shows the distribution of land in the City and ETJ based on these land use categories. Over one third of the land within the city limits is agricultural. Single-family residential uses occupy just over 20 percent of the land, and are mostly concentrated in the middle and northwest quadrant of the City. Industrial and vacant land occupies much of the southwest and southeast parts of the City. The main commercial corridors of the City are Main Street (SH95) and Second (US 79), Third and Fourth Streets. Taylor’s downtown is mainly comprised of small shops, antique stores, and small office buildings. Most of the City’s vacant buildings are in the Downtown area, and these offer opportunities for historic preservation, economic development and revitalization. Parks and trails in the City are along Bull Branch Creek. Murphy Park and Bull Branch Park comprise most of the City’s parkland.

Taylor has an extensive ETJ to the southwest of the City. This area is beyond the normal one-mile limit. It is predominately agricultural with a number of single family residences

The following, **Table 4.1 - Existing Land Use Map Acreage** shows the acreage for each land use category on the Existing Land Use Plan.

**TABLE 4.1
EXISTING LAND USE MAP ACREAGE***

CATEGORY	ACRES	PERCENT
Agricultural/Open Space	2,375.1	33.3%
Single Family	1,493.0	20.9%
Multi Family	76.3	1.0%
Manufactured Home	18.4	0.3%
Commercial	250.0	3.5%
Industrial	298.4	4.2%
Semi-Public/Institutional	311.6	4.4%
Public	355.3	5.0%
Park	326.4	4.6%
Vacant Building	5.3	0.1%
ROW	1,613.9	22.7%
SUBTOTAL	7,123.7	100.00%
ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction)**	11,368.5	100.00
TOTAL	18,492.2	100.00%

Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

* Acreages are approximate

** Petitioned ETJ to be added

2025 Future Land Use Plan

The **Future Land Use Plan**, as displayed in **Figure 4.2**, is the City's general guide for managing growth in terms of the location, type, scale and density of land development and redevelopment. One purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to capture and build into City policies and regulations the community's values regarding how, when and where Taylor should develop in the future. This is significant since the findings and recommendations contained in the City's Comprehensive Plan provide the legal basis for various development ordinances, which are the major tools available for implementing the City's plan and achieving an efficient and desirable land use pattern. The plan also includes considerations related to the City's future annexation policy and planning.

Future Land Use Classifications

The Future Land Use Plan is not the Zoning Map, but a guide for the future and eventual use of land in the City and ETJ. The following classifications define the various types of land illustrated in **Figure 4.2 – 2025 Future Land Use Plan**.

- ❖ **Agriculture and Open Space** (Light Green): Sparsely populated areas with limited development that are still distinct from more urbanized areas. This typically encompasses relatively large tracts of land used for agriculture, forestry, resource extraction, widely scattered single family homesites and business establishments, natural open space, or activities not requiring permanent structures or improvements. Also includes areas that are gradually transitioning into urban uses and development.
- ❖ **Single Family Residential** (Yellow): Residential development, including conventional detached homes, as well as patio homes, zero lot-line homes and cluster units.
- ❖ **Downtown Neighborhood** (Beige): Older areas of the City where rehabilitation, repair and infill housing should be encouraged. Small-scale neighborhood businesses are also encouraged.
- ❖ **Multi-Family Residential** (Orange): Multi-family residential dwellings, typically identified as duplexes, triplexes, quadruplex, and apartments. Unlike the other residential categories, this classification generates sufficient traffic and utility impacts to be treated as nonresidential uses and is best located at the intersections of major arterials.
- ❖ **Manufactured Home** (Brown): Factory built, single-family structures on a parcel of land under one ownership for the placement of two or more mobile homes.
- ❖ **Downtown** (Peach): Area of the downtown consisting of the Central Business District and some infill and second story residential use. Economic development is encouraged while

preserving the unique identity and historic significance of the area.

- ✦ **Commercial (Red):** Includes operations involving sales, repair and/or storage of goods, services and equipment. Examples of these include retail centers, supermarkets, restaurants and entertainment facilities automobile repair, contractor sales and storage, home furnishings, showrooms, truck rentals and self-storage facilities. These uses are best located along major arterials in conjunction with other more intense uses such as industry.
- ✦ **Industrial (Purple):** Low-intensity manufacturing and/or assembly/ware-housing/distribution/maintenance of products. Also larger-scale manufacturing and/or processing/distribution activities, often accompanied by outdoor activity areas or storage.
- ✦ **Institutional (Blue):** Public and private schools, colleges, churches, and prisons.
- ✦ **Public (Light Blue):** Includes all City and County owned facilities other governmental facilities such as, libraries, fire stations, landfills and post offices, as well as utility facilities such as water storage facilities, electrical substations and telephone facilities.
- ✦ **Parks and Recreation (Green):** Public parks and trails, other public and private recreation areas and facilities, golf courses, and undeveloped reserves and greenways.
- ✦ **Business or Technology Park (Pink):** Campus setting for office buildings and light/high technology manufacturing. Includes hotel, motel, and restaurant uses.

Planning Principles and Policy Guides

When determining specific land use locations, the following planning principles and policy guides should be referred to in order to ensure the least negative impact on any land use, but in particular, to residential land uses. Incompatible land uses should not be placed adjacent to each other.

In General

- ✦ Neighboring land uses should not detract from the enjoyment or value of properties.
- ✦ Potential negative land use impacts (noise, odor, pollution, excessive light, traffic, etc.) should be considered and minimized.
- ✦ Transportation access and circulation should be provided for uses that generate large numbers of trips. Pedestrian and bicycle access should be addressed where appropriate.

- ⊗ Compatibility with existing uses should be maintained. Well-planned, mixed uses that are compatible are to be encouraged.
- ⊗ Floodplain areas should not be encroached upon by future development unless there is compliance with stringent floodplain management practices. These areas should be used for parks or recreational or related purposes, or for agricultural uses.
- ⊗ Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected, including wildlife habitat areas and topographically constrained areas within the floodplain.

Residential

- ⊗ Schools, parks and community facilities should be located close to or within residential neighborhoods.
- ⊗ Residential areas should not be next to industrial areas.
- ⊗ Residential and commercial areas may be adjacent if separated by a buffer.
- ⊗ Houses should have direct access to residential streets but not to primary streets.
- ⊗ Houses should not be adjacent to major highways.
- ⊗ Neighborhoods should be buffered from primary streets.
- ⊗ Residential developments should include adequate area for parks and recreation facilities, schools and churches.
- ⊗ Manufactured homes should be located at appropriate sites within the City where there are similar homes.

Last year the Planning and Zoning Commission developed a series of *Residential Zoning Policies* to specifically guide the application of the Zoning Ordinance with respect to new development and redevelopment of residential areas. The general planning policies stated herein are not intended to replace, but to supplement those policies.

Retail/Office

- ⊗ Neighborhood retail and service uses should be located at intersections of arterial or collector streets or at the edge of neighborhood areas unless appropriately placed within a planned development.
- ⊗ Retail development should be clustered throughout the City and convenient to residential areas.
- ⊗ Buffers should separate retail/office uses and residential areas.
- ⊗ Downtown should be the major focus of office, retail and service activities, particularly through adaptive reuse of existing structures or redevelopment of vacant or industrial use parcels.
- ⊗ Office and professional uses should be compatible with nearby residential areas and other uses through appropriate building height limitations and adequate buffering and landscaping.

- ✧ Low-intensity office and professional uses should provide a transition between more intense uses and residential areas.

Commercial

- ✧ Commercial areas should include a range of development types to serve regional as well as local needs, from large commercial developments to smaller, freestanding commercial sites.
- ✧ Commercial development should be concentrated in nodes at intersections and along major thoroughfares that are designed and constructed to accommodate heavy traffic.
- ✧ Parcels should be large enough to accommodate commercial use.
- ✧ Commercial uses with more intensive operational or traffic service characteristics should be located away from most residential areas.
- ✧ Buffers should separate commercial uses from residential areas, especially where the commercial use involves visible storage or display of merchandise or materials.

Industrial

- ✧ Industrial development should have direct access to truck routes, hazardous material routes and railroads.
- ✧ Industrial uses should be targeted in selected industrial development areas.
- ✧ Industrial development should have good access to primary streets and major highways.
- ✧ Industrial development should be separated from other uses by buffers.
- ✧ Industrial development should not be directly adjacent to residential areas.

Parks and Open Space

- ✧ Parks should be evenly distributed throughout the City and include larger community parks and smaller neighborhood parks.
- ✧ There should be linkages between parks, schools, employment centers and residential areas.
- ✧ Parks are a desirable use for floodplain areas.
- ✧ Parks and open space may be used to buffer incompatible land uses.
- ✧ Natural features should be used as buffers or open space between or around developed areas.

Community Facilities

- ✧ Combining community facilities to take advantage of location and construction costs.
- ✧ Community facilities should be located adjacent to major streets to accommodate traffic.
- ✧ Community facilities should be centrally located in easily accessible locations.

- ⊕ Downtown should be enhanced as a civic and cultural entertainment/tourism center.
- ⊕ Community facilities should be well buffered from nearby residential areas.

Projected Future Land Use Allocation

With the 2000 population of the city at 13,575 and the most likely projected 2025 population of the city to be 27,872, the following land use requirements were developed. As illustrated on the FLUP, they are based upon the acres per capita for each land use category existing in 2003. The estimated spatial requirements necessary to accommodate Taylor’s projected growth to the year 2025 are identified in the following table.

**TABLE 4.2
FUTURE LAND USE MAP ACREAGE ***

CATEGORY	ACRES	PERCENT
Agricultural/Open Space		
Single Family		
Downtown Residential		
Multi Family		
Manufacture Home		
Downtown		
Commercial		
Industrial		
Institutional		
Public		
Park		
Business Park		
ROW		
ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction)**		
TOTAL	18,492.2	100.00%

Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

* Acreages are approximate

**Petitioned ETJ to be added

In addition to the general residential and commercial land uses currently in use in Taylor the FLUP recommends several new uses.

Downtown Neighborhood encompasses the areas in the central part of the City. These areas have a variety of housing styles and conditions that need to be retained, preserved and rehabilitated. Small neighborhood businesses should be encouraged. Both single and multi-family uses should be permitted, but one should not have a negative impact on the other. Infill housing should be encouraged and the City should continue to support the expanded areas with reduced permit fees and code considerations.

A Business Park would provide for office buildings, light and high technology and manufacturing. Typically buildings are no more than two to three stories and specific design and landscaping standards are established to create an attractive campus like environment. Business Parks provide compatible adjacent uses to residential areas, and serve as buffers between higher intensity industrial uses and residential areas. In Taylor, Business Park land use provides a buffer between the airport and surrounding residential development, and an attractive entry area into the city.

The Downtown land use is intended to protect and strengthen the Central Business District, both function and character. Chapter 9 – Central Business District provides details on economic incentives, architectural preservation and development policies to make the CBD a vibrant part of the city.

Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goals, with their accompanying objectives and proposed actions for future land use, will point the community toward a more orderly and efficient growth scenario. The desired future arrangement of land use is developed based on physical characteristics in terms of the type, density, and location of residential, commercial, industrial, and other public and private land use types.

The following goals, objectives and action are based on traditional urban planning principles and input from community residents and leaders during the planning process. These principles establish a framework in which land development and redevelopment practices are more likely to result in an economically vital, fiscally responsible, environmentally aware, and more livable community. The desired result is well-managed, orderly growth that enhances residents' quality of life. The goals, objectives and actions appear in no particular priority order.

Residential Goal: A variety of safe, high quality residential areas that meet the needs of Taylor's population.

Objective L1: Provide suitable areas for a variety of residential types and densities.

- Action L1.1:** Identify appropriate residential development areas on Future Land Use Plan (site suitability, access, utilities).
- Action L1.2:** Identify housing in need of repair, dilapidated, requiring demolition. (See Housing Chapter)
- Action L1.3:** Include neighborhood conservation provisions in zoning (residential buffering, performance standards, protection against encroaching incompatible uses).
- Action L1.4:** Establish open space easements and/or linear parks and trails around residential areas.

- Action L1.5:** Coordinate City, County and school district facilities planning and land acquisition (joint school/park opportunities).
- Action L1.6:** Take advantage of the conceptual subdivision design phase to encourage effective and creative development planning.
- Action L1.7:** Extend trail systems and linear park linkages through new development.
- Action L1.8:** Ensure streets, sidewalks, neighborhood parks, street lighting, drainage, and traffic control, with neighborhood policing and fire protection.
- Action L1.9:** Screen residential areas from highways and major thoroughfares.
- Action L1.10:** Allow second story residential uses in the downtown area.
- Action L1.11:** Support the continued rehabilitation and restoration of the Downtown Neighborhoods through appropriate, but considerate code enforcement.

Preservation Goal: Preservation of historic houses and neighborhoods.

Objective L2: Protect areas of historical and architectural significance in the City.

- Action L2.1:** Identify areas and housing of historical and architectural significance.
- Action L2.2:** Continue to work with the state and county historical commissions to identify and preserve historical and architecturally significant buildings
- Action L2.3:** Consider additional codes and regulations that would encourage renovation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic (older than 50 years) and older (less than 50 years but worthy of repair).

Retail, Office and Industrial Development Goal: Vibrant and viable retail, office and industrial areas, supported by a quality community offering many assets and opportunities for economic development.

Objective L3: Designate areas that can support industrial development in the Future Land Use Plan and zoning map (transportation access, adequate utilities, protection of residential areas).

- Action L3.1:** Concentrate industrial activities along the railroad corridor.
- Action L3.2:** Upgrade utilities and roadways in prime locations for potential development.

Action L3.3: Rezone key areas designated for growth or preservation.

Action L3.4: Create a Business Park Zoning District that encourages attractive, quality development in a campus setting.

Objective L4: Expand retail, office and other commercial and development area.

Action L4.1: Appropriately separated or buffered from residential areas.

Action L4.2: Locate major commercial and industrial activities along roadways with the greatest traffic-handling capacity, particularly along Main Street and the proposed north east Loop road.

Action L4.3: Create a business park zoning district to provide for offices and technology centers in a campus environment.

Action L4.4: Identify locations for future commercial development clusters (versus scattered and/or “strip” development).

Action L4.5: Attract specific desired uses (retail, cinema, entertainment, etc.) through targeted recruiting, incentives or other means.

Action L4.6: Provide economic development incentives and expansion/relocation assistance for existing businesses.

Action L4.7: Review zoning and other development ordinances (appropriate regulations and districts to keep older commercial areas viable, encourage redevelopment, ensure quality new development).

Objective L5: Preserve and enhance downtown character and economic investment.

Action L5.1: Encourage more mixed-use, live/work development opportunities downtown and in other appropriate areas.

Action L5.2: Review Central Business District (B-3) zone for potential adjustments or enhancements.

Use of the Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan map does not constitute zoning regulations nor establish zoning districts. The graphic representation on the Future Land Use Plan map is intended only to help the City’s elected and appointed officials and residents visualize the desired future land development pattern in the community. It is not a rigid, parcel-specific mandate for how land shall be developed. When proposed development differs somewhat from the generalized land use pattern depicted for an area, it is the responsibility of the Planning and Zoning Commission, supported by City staff, to determine whether the development will

otherwise be in keeping with the goals and objectives of the City's Comprehensive Plan, as well as the Land Use Policies included in this chapter.

Taylor is on the brink of unprecedented opportunities for growth and development. Managing the growth, balancing the desires of the community and addressing residential and commercial demands are challenges that can be best addressed through comprehensive and consistent consideration of the issues. The Future Land Use Plan gives the City the tools to contemplate and decide on what is best for the community and its residents.